

# Guide to the John Gracey Collection

1814- 1924





## John Gracey Collection

1814- 1924

4.09 cubic feet

gcah.ms.4574

The purpose of this finding aid is to help you understand the nature of this collection and to assist you in the retrieval of material from this collection. The following pages contain a brief biographical history of the person, or persons, who created or collected these papers, followed by a general description of the collection in the scope and content note. If more detailed information is warranted then series descriptions also appear. The container listing appears last and is the listing of material in each box, or container, of this collection.

To request material you need to turn to the container listing section. It is essentially a listing of file folders, or artifact items, in the collection. Each folder, or item, has a call number associated with it. Each folder also lists the inclusive dates of the material in the folder. On the material request form list both the call number and the folder, or item, title. Use a different line for each folder, or item, requested. When your request sheet is complete, or full, bring it to the archivist and the material will be retrieved.

### Biographical Note

John Talbot Gracey (1831- 1912), American Missionary to India, was born in Philadelphia on September 16, 1831. He was very studious, and liked to study the sciences. He eventually went off to college to study medicine in an attempt to one day become a physician. However, it was during this time that he realized that his true calling was not to heal people physically, but spiritually. When he made this decision in 1850, he joined the Virginia and later the Pennsylvania Conferences. Gracey received his masters from both Ohio Wesleyan University as well as Dickinson College, and earned the title of Doctor of Divinity from Syracuse University. On March 10, 1858, John married Annie Ryder, who was at the time working at Ohio Wesleyan University.

Early in 1861, Gracey decided that he and his wife were being called for missions in India. At the time, India was still a very remote location, one especially devoid of westerners since relations between India and Britain had not been so great. India was a very important place for missions, and a land in need of help, but few had yet pioneered the mission field in that area. Gracey brought together a team of missionaries, including his wife, to embark on such a journey. They left the United States in June 1861 and arrived in India in October. The trip had been quite dangerous, and the group was lucky to have arrived safely. Now that they were in India, they got right to work. Gracey was a very impressive man, intelligent yet humble and kind. One could always find Gracey sitting with the local children or the older men, telling them stories of the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan, and the locals would accept this with excited and wild imaginations. After only living in India for five months, Gracey gave his first sermon in a native tongue. Gracey was also involved with the Methodist Indian Conference, of which he was secretary when he arrived, and President in 1867. During his time in India, John lived in Sitapur, Calcutta, Bareilly, and Naini Tal. He also took a short excursion into the mountains to the north.

In 1868, their homestead in India was abruptly cut short when Annie became severely ill. Upon return to the United States, it was clear that she could not endure the extreme tropical environment, and thus the two could not return together. So after a marvelous seven years serving and teaching in India, John retired from that particular field, never to return to India.

For the latter stage of his life, Gracey took on many different roles. He was involved with a missionary society through the church, giving speeches and writings in the interest of all missions. He was a professor of a historical theology at Drew University. He transferred to the Central New York and Genessee Conferences. While in these conferences, Gracey was the pastor of many churches, from Rochester, Buffalo, and Brooklyn to holding the position of elder at a church in Syracuse for six years. He also organized and presided over the International Missionary Union in 1883, an organization that protects the rights and safety of missionaries. From late 1876 to early 1877, Gracey was invited to join a group in a visit to missions in West Africa. There he evaluated the work and gave suggestions to

improving life and efficiency in the mission field. Upon the return to the United States, Gracey stopped in Spain and France as a little vacation.

Gracey retired from the pastorate in 1889, but that didn't end his ministry. He worked for the Northern Christian Advocate as the missionary editor for 18 years. He also continued to speak about his experiences about being a missionary. He wrote a few books on his thoughts as well.

Along with being such an active member in the church, Gracey was a devoted father of three. One of these children, Frances Ida Gracey, became a missionary to China. She devoted her life to helping little children in China have a better life. His wife Annie died on February 17, 1908, and John died four years later, on January 5, 1912.

## Scope Note

A great deal of the work, biography, and family life of John Talbot Gracey is contained in this document. Gracey wrote a great deal of sermons in his life, many of which exist in this document. Some of these are completely written out, while some are still in outline form. Also included are many newspaper and magazine articles written by Gracey about various aspects of his life. There are articles about mission work, about other religions, and about his own Christian faith. The majority of these would have been published in a Christian newspaper or magazine, such as The Methodist.

Much of Gracey's missionary life is documented, from articles written about his experiences to notes he took while on different mission trips, to photographs of mission work. Gracey had many journals, some of which can be found in this collection.

As for his biography and family life, there are correspondences between Gracey and different members of his family. Some of his wife's writings are included in this collection, as well as responses to her work. Also included is information about his daughter Ida's missionary work in China. An interesting thing to note is the copy of marriage licenses from his wife Annie's father during his pastorate. This provides a bit of family history for the Gracey household.

## Arrangement

Material has been arranged in the following manner.

*SERIES: WRITINGS.*

*SERIES: MISSIONARY WORK.*

*SERIES: FAMILY.*

## Related Material

Missionary Correspondence Collection

Mission Biographical Reference Collection

## Access Restrictions

For personal papers refer to the donor form otherwise use There are no restrictions regarding this collection.

## Restrictions on Use

Detailed use restrictions relating to our collections can be requested from the office of the archivist at the General Commission on Archives and History. Photocopying is handled by the staff and may be limited in certain instances. Before using any material for publication from this collection a formal request for permission to publish is expected and required.

## Preferred Citation

When citing material from this collection please use the following format: Direct reference to the item or its file folder, John Talbot Gracey Collection, United Methodist Church Archives - GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. Do not make use of the item's call number as that is not a stable descriptor.

## Subject Terms

### *Additonal Creators - Personal*

Gracey, Annie Ryder.

### *Subject Names - Corporate*

Methodist Episcopal Church  
Ohio Wesleyan University  
Syracuse, University

### *Subject Topics*

Christian life  
Evangelistic work  
Marriage.  
Missionaries  
Missions  
Missions-Africa  
Missions-China  
Missions-India  
Pastoral Care  
Religion  
Sermons  
Teachers

### *Subject Geographic*

Africa  
China  
Europe  
India  
New York (State)  
Spain.

### *Genre*

Articles  
Correspondence  
Journals  
Lectures  
Manuscripts  
Memorials.  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Sermons  
Speeches

### *Occupations*

Minister.  
Missionary

## Table of Contents

## Container List

### *Writings*

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
1601-4-2:1	Sermons	1850-1853
1601-4-2:2	Sermons	1855-1857
1601-4-2:3	Sermons	1860-1869
1601-4-2:4	Sermons	1870-1879
1601-4-2:5	Sermons	1880-1886
1601-4-2:6	Sermons	1887
1601-4-2:7	Sermons	1888
1601-4-2:8	Sermons	1890-1899
1601-4-2:9	Sermons	1900-1907
1601-4-3:1	Sermons: A - D	Undated
1601-4-3:2	Sermons: F - P	Undated
1601-4-3:3	Sermons: S - W	Undated
1601-4-3:4	Journal of Sermons	1903
1601-4-3:5	Scrapbook of Articles - Africa	1877-1883
1601-4-3:6	Scrapbook of Articles - Misc	1847-1890
1601-4-3:7	Misc Articles	1881-1905
1601-4-3:8	Misc Lectures	Undated

### *Missionary Work*

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
1601-4-4:1	Journal of Missions-India	Undated
1601-4-4:2	Photograph of Missions-India	1863
1601-4-4:3	Journal of Missions-Africa	1876
1601-4-4:4	Missionary Books	Undated
1601-4-4:5	Listing of Books	Undated
1601-4-4:6	Articles-Missions	1895-1903
1601-4-5:1	Ida Gracey Home for Crippled Children	1915-1924
1601-4-5:2	Photographs - Ida Gracey Home for Crippled Children	1923
1601-4-5:3	Correspondence	1862-1869
1601-4-5:4	Correspondence	1876
1601-4-5:5	Correspondence	1877
1601-4-5:6	Correspondence	1907
1601-4-5:7	Correspondence	Undated

### *Family*

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
1601-4-4:7	Articles-Memorial to JT Gracey	1919
1601-4-4:8	Writings of Annie Gracey	1855
1601-4-4:9	Book reviews for Annie Gracey	1881-1882
1601-4-4:10	Articles - Ida Gracey	1911-1917
1601-4-5:8	Marriage Licenses	1814
1601-4-6:1	Scrapbook of Gracey History	1908-1912
1601-4-6:2	Scrapbook of Gracey History	1868-1903
1602-4-1:1	Diplomas	1855